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Clothing, Nudity, and Shame in the Book of Ezekiel and Prophetic Oracles of Judgement

Even though few texts in the Hebrew Bible are concerned with nudity, the idea plays a major role as an image of judgement. In a complex relationship with the idea of clothing and the anthropological codes of honour and shame, nudity as a result from depriving someone of clothing represents a punitive act on the victim, exposing them to violence and humiliation. In the Hebrew Prophets, six texts deal with clothing, nudity, and shame, namely Hos 2:4–17; Nah 3:1–7; Isa 47:1–4; Jer 13:18–27, and Ezek 16 and 23, and all of them employ the imagery of marriage between Yhwh and a female figure as an image of judgement – the so-called “marriage metaphor”.¹

In the following, I will first offer a textual analysis of clothing, nudity, and shame in these six texts, assessing their specific use of the imagery and their interrelatedness (1). This part is organized diachronically, roughly following the probable literary-historical sequence, and will comprise translations of selected passages. Thus, we will start from an analysis of Hos 2:4–17 (1.1), the most probably first text to use the prophetic marriage metaphor in the description of judgement against personified Israel. Motifs and imagery are later taken up in the judgement oracles against foreign cities, namely Nineveh in Nah 3:1–7 (1.2) and Babylon in Isa 47:1–4 (1.3), while the collection of judgement oracles in Jer 13:18–27 (1.4) relates the ideas of clothing and nudity to the historical background of the Babylonian exile. This background is then elaborated in the form of two lengthy allegories of biblical history in chs. Ezek 16 and 23, which employ the ideas of clothing and nudity in their depiction of the judgement on Israel and Judah (1.5.).² In the second part, I will demonstrate that the prophecies should be contextualised in the light of the anthropological codes

¹ On term and concept see the monograph by Gerlinde Baumann, *Love and Violence: Marriage as Metaphor for the Relationship between Yhwh and Israel in the Prophetic Books*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003.

² On the analysis of Ezek 16 and 23 see also the corresponding parts in my forthcoming article “Uncovering the Nymphomaniac: The verbum גלח and Exile as Sexual Violence in Ezek 16 and 23”; it has been written at the same time as the current chapter and shows some overlap.

of honour and shame that add to our understanding of the imagery (2.). The last part will offer some observations on the literary relationship between the texts and some conclusions about the impact of clothing, nudity, and shame in the Hebrew Prophets (3.).

1. Clothing and Nudity in the Prophets

1.1. Hosea 2:4–17

- 4 Plead with your mother, plead – for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband – that she remove her whoring from her face³ and her adultery from between her breasts.
- 5 Lest I strip her off naked (פְּנִיאָפְשִׁיטָנָה עֲרֹמָה), and expose her as on the day she was born (וְהִצַּגְתִּיהָ כְּיוֹם הַוִּלְדָּה), and make her like a wilderness, and turn her into dry land, and let her die from thirst.
(...)
- 7b For she said: I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax (צִמְרִי וּפְשִׁתִּי), my oil and my drink.
(...)
- 10 And she did not realise that it was I who gave her the grain and the wine, and the oil; silver I supplied in large quantity for her and gold – they have used it for Baal.
- 11 Therefore, I will take back my grain at its time, and my wine in its season. And I will snatch (from her) my wool and my flax (וְהִצַּלְתִּי צִמְרִי וּפְשִׁתִּי), to cover her nakedness (לְכִסּוֹת אֶת-עֲרוּתָהּ).
- 12 And now I will uncover her genitals (אֶגְלֶה אֶת-נִבְלָתָהּ) in the sight of her lovers. And no one will deliver her from me.
- 13 I will put an end to all her rejoicing, her feasts, her new moons, her Sabbaths, and all her appointed festivals.

³ The reading follows the vocalisation of many Hebrew Manuscripts (מִפְנִיָּה), which agree in their consonants with the MT (מִפְנִיָּה) that seems to reflect a transmission mistake.

14 And I will lay waste her vines and her fig trees, of which she said: Payment are they for me, which my lovers have given me. And I will make them into a thicket, and the wild animals will eat them up.

15 I will call her to account for the feast days of the Baals, when she made sacrifices for them, and she dressed up herself with rings and jewellery (וּתַעַד נְזֻמָּה וְחִלְיָתָהּ), and she went after her lovers, but me she forgot, says Yhwh.

(...)

The extended speech in Hos 2:4–17 is part of the “primal text” of the prophetic marriage imagery in Hos 1–3*, assuming that these chapters are the first to use marriage as a metaphor for the relationship between Yhwh and the land/the people.⁴ Bauman has defined the imagery as follows: “What is ‘metaphorical’ in the prophetic marriage imagery is the particular elaboration of Israel/Jerusalem as an unfaithful wife, and Yhwh as a husband who, despite her failings, for the most part clings tenaciously to the marriage and the marital relationship itself.”⁵ Now, the specific use of the marriage metaphor in Hos 2:4–17 is important for our topic, as the imagery employs both clothing and nudity as a means to depict judgement on the unfaithful wife. Within Hos 1–3, the speech in 2:4–17 forms a self-contained unit, delineated from its context by the onset of court metaphors in 2:4 and the consistency of theme and form throughout.⁶ The oracle starts from Yhwh’s call to court in 2:4–7, in which the divine husband calls the children to plead with their mother, because she has committed adultery and invalidated the marriage (2:4). Here, verses 2:6–7a can be identified as a later insertion that levels the difference between mother and children and further characterises the conduct of the woman as shameful (2:7a: הַבִּישָׁה).⁷ Hence the original call to court in 2:4–5(7b) is followed by a judgement speech that can be divided into three parts,

⁴ See Van Dijk-Hemmes, “Metaphorization,” 167–168; Stienstra, *YHWH*, 89–103; Wischnowsky, *Tochter Zion*, 101–111; Baumann, *Love*, 85–104; cf. also Baumann’s extended review of scholarship on this topic (Baumann, *ibid.*, 8–22).

⁵ Baumann, *Love*, 30.

⁶ See Wolff, *Hosea*, 31–32; Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, 45–46; Seifert, *Reden*, 94–97; differently, Anderson/Freedman, *Hosea*, 214–219, assume a more extended “piece of sustained discourse” in 2:4–25, similarly Rudnig-Zelt, *Hoseastudien*, 79–85, while Vielhauer, *Werden*, 145–157, deals with the unit Hos 2:4–15.

⁷ See Wischnowsky, *Tochter Zion*, 102; Vielhauer, *Werden*, 147.

each introduced by the particle לִכֵּן (2:8–10, 2:11–15; 2:16–17).⁸ With regard to literary unity, the three לִכֵּן-arguments attract suspicion: first, the beginnings of the initial judgement word in 2:8–9 interrupt the coherence between 2:7b and 2:10, which describe the misconception of the wife, who attributes her provisions to her lovers instead of realising that they are supplied by her husband. This suggests that vv. 2:8–9 are a later supplementation, interrupting the original connection between vv. 2:7b and 2:10 that together form the evidence for the judgement word in 2:11–15.⁹ Furthermore, the third speech in 2:16–17 can also be identified as a later addition, furnishing the previous judgement with an outlook on salvation.¹⁰ Thus, we can outline an original core in 2:4–5, 7b, 10–15, in which Yhwh is presented as a prosecutor undertaking a court case against his unfaithful wife, whose whoring (זְנוּנוּיָהּ) and adultery (וְנִאֲפֻכְיָהּ, 2:4) are cause to announce punishment.¹¹

The first mention of clothing and nudity occurs in the introductory call to court, in which the wife is threatened with being stripped naked and exposed as on birth (2:5: פָּרֵאֲפִיטָנָה (עֶרְמָה). The verb פשט *hiph'el* is usually used transitively with a double accusative of the person and the object removed,¹² which suggests that the emphasis is on the deprivation of clothing as a form of protection, rather than on the humiliation of the woman: “By stripping her ‘naked’, he [Yahweh] indicated his own freedom from the obligation to clothe her, a legal obligation the man assumes with marriage (Ex 21:10)”.¹³ This finds confirmation in the second half of v. 2:5 that relates the fate of the woman to the land being turned into a wilderness that is left to dry out. Yet the withdrawal of material support takes a more sinister turn in 2:11–12, when Yhwh first announces that he will deprive his wife of the minimum subsistence means, naming among other things wool and flax (צִמְרִי וּפִשֵּׁתִי, 2:11, see 2:7) as

⁸ The structuring function of the particle לִכֵּן has also been recognised by Wolff, *Hosea*, 32; Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, 45, and Seifert, *Reden*, 94–95, even though all of them arrive at a more complex outline.

⁹ Following Seifert, *Reden*, 95; Wischnowsky, *Tochter Zion*, 102, and Vielhauer, *Werden*, 147–148. Differently, Rudnig-Zelt, *Hoseastudien*, 82–83, argues that 2:10 does not connect smoothly to 2:7; while she generally assumes literary growth in Hos 2, she refrains from outlining an original oracle.

¹⁰ See Seifert, *Reden*, 95.

¹¹ Similarly Wischnowsky, *Tochter Zion*, 100–111; there might be evidence for further supplementation within these verses, see e.g. the analyses of Yee, *Composition*, 122–125; Wacker, *Figurationen*, 213–214, 253–259, and Vielhauer, *Werden*, 145–157.

¹² See Baumann, *Love*, 96, further Schmoldt, “פשט,” 787.

¹³ Wolff, *Hosea*, 34, also Wischnowsky, *Tochter Zion*, 107.

the raw materials to produce clothing.¹⁴ The materials are qualified further as these, which serve “to cover her nakedness” (2:11: לְכִסּוֹת אֶת-עֲרוֹתָהּ). Could this still be understood as a withdrawal of provisions, the following punitive act in 2:12 proceeds to an act of sexual violence, when Yhwh announces that he will uncover the woman’s genitals (אֶגְלֶה אֶת-נִבְלָתָהּ) in sight of her former lovers. The noun נִבְלָוֹת is a *hapax legomenon* in the Hebrew Bible; however, both the use of the term עֲרוֹה (“nakedness”) in the preceding v. 2:11, and the combination with the verb גִּלָּה *pi^cel* suggests a meaning similar to עֲרוֹה, referring to the (female) genitals.¹⁵ As the combination of the verb גִּלָּה *pi^cel* with the noun עֲרוֹה clearly denotes sexual intercourse in priestly texts (“to sleep with”, see Lev 18:6–19; 20:11, 17–21),¹⁶ it is likely that the punitive act described in Hos 2:12 (“uncovering the genitals”) can similarly be understood as sexual intercourse – which in the prophetic text is forced upon the female figure and from a present understanding constitutes an act of rape.¹⁷ This interpretation finds further evidence in the second half of the verse: Here, the use of the root נָצַל in the threat that no one will snatch the woman from her divine husband suggests a situation of no escape, in which the wife is completely at her husband’s mercy. The fact that this violation happens in full view of the former lovers, adds humiliation to the abuse. Finally, the reproach in 2:15 that the wife dressed up herself (וַתַּעֲד נִזְמָה וַחֲלִיטָהּ), but had forgotten Yhwh, stresses that the woman misused her husband’s provisions in the engagement with her lovers, and labels her as the guilty party, deserving of judgement.

¹⁴ On the understanding of the nouns צֶמֶר and פֶּשֶׁת as textile raw materials see in detail Bender, *Sprache*, 49–56, and Kersken, *Töchter Zions*, 36–40.

¹⁵ There have been extended discussions on the understanding of the noun נִבְלָוֹת in Hos 2:12 (see Olyan, “Sight,” 255–261, and Wacker, *Figurationen*, 69); however, most likely is the derivation from נָבַל II (“to be foolish/to treat with contempt”), which suggests a spectrum of meanings from “shame (of a woman)” to “genitals” (see e.g. HALOT, 664; Gesenius¹⁸, 775–776); see the different translations of Hos 2:12 in scholarship (Wolff, *Hosea*, 31: “genitals”; Andersen/Freedman, *Hosea*, 215: “lewdness”; Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 43: “shamefulness”; Baumann, *Love*, 87: “shame”). Olyan, “Sight,” 255–261, argues for “the possibility of a multiplicity of meanings” (Olyan, *ibid.*, 257), including sexual violence.

¹⁶ The Hebrew verbal root גִּלָּה occurs with two main meanings: the first one (גִּלָּה I) describes the aspect of uncovering (“to uncover”), while the second (גִּלָּה II) refers to a change of location (“to go away”), which accounts for the specific meaning of “to go into exile”; the verb does not by itself carry a sexual connotation, but mainly in the *pi^cel* and *niph^{al} binyan*, גִּלָּה I can occur in combination with specific markers such as the noun עֲרוֹה to denote a sexual understanding; see Westermann/Albertz, “גִּלָּה,” 418–426; Zobel, “גִּלָּה,” 476–488; Kiefer, *Exile*, 110–147 (with specific focus on גִּלָּה as a *terminus technicus* for the exile), Baumann, *Love*, 46–52; and Klein, “Uncovering”.

¹⁷ On the understanding of violent sexual intercourse (rape) see Baumann, *Love*, 96; an act of sexual humiliation (public stripping) is suggested by Andersen/Freedmann, *Hosea*, 248; Wolff, *Hosea*, 37–38, and Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 51.

To sum up, clothing and nudity play a major role in the depiction of the marriage metaphor in Hos 2:4–17. Clothing is firstly the responsibility of the husband for the provision of his wife and can be withdrawn if the woman does not comply with what is expected from her. Yet this idea is taken further to escalate in a scene of violent abuse, when the metaphorical husband snatches clothing from his wife to add to her vulnerability in a punitive act of sexual violence (2:11–12). While in the first part of the speech, the wife takes on features of the land (2:5), the image then becomes transparent for the fate of the people and the nation as a whole.¹⁸ Later redactional work strengthens the allegorical dimension by alluding to the woman’s youth in Egypt (2:17), making the fate of the wife transparent for biblical history. It can be assumed that the conflict between the husband and his wife is a matter of honour and shame, but it is only in the later supplementation 2:7a that the behaviour of the woman is explicitly characterised as “shameful” (הַבִּישָׁה), introducing the anthropological concept into the prophetic judgement speech.

1.2. Nahum 3:1–7

- 1 Woe, city of bloodshed, she is all lying, full of plunder, prey does not part.
(...)
- 4 Because of the countless whorings of the whore, of the beauty with allure,
of the mistress of sorcery,
ensnaring¹⁹ nations with her whoring, and tribes with her sorcery.
- 5 See, I am against you, oracle of Yhwh of hosts.
And I will lift up your skirt hems²⁰ over your face (וְגִלְתִּי שׁוּלְיֶיךָ עַל-פְּנֶיךָ),

¹⁸ In this context, it is worth considering Vielhauer’s proposition that the wife in Hos 2 first represents the land, while only later supplementations account for the identification with the people (see Vielhauer, *Werden*, 152–153).

¹⁹ The MT reads a participle feminine singular of מָכַר (“the one that buys”); however, I follow the suggestion to assume a metathesis of כָּמַר, which, however, occurs only in its derivatives in the Hebrew Bible (Hab 1:15, 16: מְכַמֶּרֶת, “net”); this suggests a verbal meaning of “catching, ensnaring” (“die Völker einfing“, Perlitt, *Propheten*, 25, following the suggestion of Sellin).

²⁰ As the noun שׁוּל generally describes something that is hanging down, it has two basic meanings: “seams” and “pubic region of a woman” (see HALOT; Gesenius¹⁸, and in detail the study by Eslinger, “Infinite,” 145–173). The eleven occurrences in the Hebrew Bible appear both in a cultic context (see Exod 28:33(2), 34; 39:24, 25, 26; Isa 6:1) and in the context of sexual violence (Jer 13:22, 26; Lam 1:9; Nah 3:5). While in the cultic context, the term clearly refers to the lower border of a garment, the “hem”, there is some discussion about its understanding in the context of sexual violence, where it can stand both for the (female) genitalia and the

and I will let the nations look on your bareness (וְהִרְאִיתִי גוֹיִם מֵעֶרְךָ),

and kingdoms on your shame (וּמַמְלָכוֹת קִלְוִיָּךְ).

6 And I will throw filth on you (וְהִשְׁלַכְתִּי עָלֶיךָ שִׁקְצִים),

and I will treat you with contempt (וְנִבְלָתִיד), and make you a spectacle.

7 Then everyone who sees you, will flee from you, and will say:

Devastated is Nineveh – who will lament her?

Where shall I seek comforters for you?²¹

In the prophetic oracle Nah 3:1–7, Yhwh announces judgement against the personified city Nineveh, the capital of the Neo-Assyrian empire, which fell in 612 BCE. Starting from a woe oracle against the “City of Bloodshed” (3:1: עִיר דָּמִים) in 3:1–3, the reproach in v. 3:4 accuses the city of whoredom (זְנוּנִים) and sorcery (כִּשְׁף), which serves as justification for the announcement of punishment in 3:5–7. There is some agreement that the oracle is composed of diverse materials, but scholarship differs especially in the question of the basic oracle.²² However, the announcement of judgement in 3:4–6(7) connects well with the introduction of the woe oracle in 3:1, suggesting original coherence, while the mention of nations and kingdoms in 3:5 shows that this (part-)oracle was from its beginnings addressed to Nineveh.²³

Similarly to Hos 2:4–17, the punishment of Nineveh in 3:1–7* draws on the images of clothing and nudity, while the terminology leaves no doubt that the punishment executed by Yhwh himself is to be understood as sexual abuse. In v. 3:4, three acts illustrate that Yhwh is indeed against Nineveh: He first undresses the woman forcefully by lifting up the

garment that covers them (see the overview by Baumann, Love, 52–55). With regard to Nah 3:5, the formulation וְנִגְלִיתִי שׁוֹלֵךְ עַל-פָּנֶיךָ seems to suggest that a garment is lifted up by its hems to undress the woman up to her face (thus Perlitt, *Propheten*, 29; Christensen, *Nahum*, 343–344; Baumann, *Gott*, 59; differently, Podella, *Lichtkleid*, 52, understands the whole phrase as a direct object “that what covers your face”, referring to a veil). However, considering that there is practically no non-metaphorical or non-euphemistic word for sexual organs in the Hebrew language, it cannot be ruled out that שׁוֹל in Nah 3:5 is an euphemism for the female genitals.

²¹ The Septuagint reads a pronoun 3. Person feminine instead (αὐτῇ), which can be explained as an erroneous assimilation to the preceding quotation, while the MT has retained the change of speech from the bypasser’s words back to Yhwh-speech at the end of the verse; see Perlitt, *Propheten*, 25.

²² On the discussion see Spronk, *Nahum*, 115–117. While Wöhrle, *Abschluss*, 44–52, argues for a basic oracle against Juda in 3:1, 4–6 that is secondarily reworked into an oracle against Assyria (3:2–3, 7), Kratz, *Pescher*, 130–133, assumes an original oracle about the destruction of Nineveh (3:2–3, 7aβ) that has later been supplemented by 3:1, 4–7aαb.

²³ Thus Kratz, “Pescher,” 132.

hems of her garment to her face,²⁴ which serves as a prelude for the sexual humiliation to come, when Yhwh exposes both her bareness (מַעַר) and her shame (קָלִיז) to the stare of the nations (3:5), thus making her a “spectacle” (3:6: רָאִי). Abuse is added to humiliation in 3:6, as Yhwh pelts her with filth (שִׁקָּצִים) and treats her with contempt (וְנִבְלָתִיד). While the noun שִׁקָּץ is associated with impurity in the sense of being unclean,²⁵ the verb נבל in its *pi^cel binyan* implies the declaration to be void or invalid and represents “destruction of communal bonds”²⁶ that accounts for the state of utterly shame and devastation, to which the female is reduced in Nah 3:7.

The terminology in 3:4, drawing heavily on the lemma זִנָּה, demonstrates that the marriage metaphor stands in the background of the prophetic oracle, even though the focus on Nineveh, a foreign city, rather excludes any sort of marital relationship with Yhwh. However, the imagery in the oracle clearly recalls features of the metaphor (discrediting of a female as a “whore”, exposing her to sexual violence) and can be understood as a continuation of the metaphor for the purpose of announcing judgement against a foreign nation.²⁷ In this exegetical reinterpretation of the imagery, clothing functions similar to its use in the original oracle Hos 2* as protection and status symbol that can be withdrawn in a forceful act of stripping, which leaves the female figure exposed to sexual humiliation and abuse. As to the historic setting of the oracle, it can be suggested that dates after the fall of Nineveh in 612 BCE, and represents a later theological reflection on the downfall of the Assyrian Empire.²⁸

²⁴ On this interpretation see FN 200.

²⁵ See Christensen, *Nahum*, 344.

²⁶ Marböck, “נבל,” 161. It certainly attracts attention that the corresponding noun נִבְלָה appears in a number of biblical texts that deal with sexual violence (Gen 34:7; Judg 19:23, 24; 20:6, 10; 2 Sam 13:12), which leads Baumann to suggest that Nah 3:6 could even be understood as describing an act of rape (see Baumann, “Soldat,” 59).

²⁷ Thus Baumann, *Love*, 209–213. She further points to the portrayal of Queen Jezebel in 2 Kgs 9:22, whose typecasting as a sorcerer and whore (עַד־זִנוּנִי אִיבָל אִמָּךְ וְכַשְׁפִּיָּה הָרָבִים) serves as another literary *Vorlage* for the depiction of Nineveh in Nah 3:4, showing Nineveh in the negative image of Jezebel (see Baumann, “Soldat,” 55–60, 64).

²⁸ Thus Kratz, “Pescher,” 132, who, however, assumes a two-stage literary growth of the oracle, supplementing an original saying about the destruction of Nineveh with a later theological interpretation as an oracle of judgement, see FN 22.

1.3. *Isaiah 47:1–4*

- 1 Come down and sit in the dust, virgin daughter²⁹ of Babylon.
Sit down on the ground, where there is no throne, daughter of Chaldea.
For you will not continue to be called delicate and dainty.
- 2 Take millstones and grind flower, remove your veil (גְּלִי צִמְתָּךְ),
strip off your flowing skirt (חֲשִׁפֵּי-שָׁבֶל), uncover the leg (גְּלִי-שׁוֹק), pass through
streams.
- 3 Your nakedness shall be uncovered (תִּגְלֵ עֲרוֹתֶיךָ), and your shame shall be seen.
Vengeance I will take, and I will not meet anyone.³⁰
- 4 Our redeemer – Yhwh Zebaoth is his name,
the holy one of Israel.

Next to Nah 3:1–7, the chapter Isa 47 is the second prophetic text that refers to clothing and nudity in a judgement oracle against the personification of a foreign nation, namely Babylon. In its main part, the chapter comprises a divine monologue, in which the prophetic speaker addresses the female figure and announces judgement against her. Scholarship is divided in the questions of structure and literary unity in ch. Isa 47, but more recently, the structuring function of the initial imperatives in vv. 1, 5, 8, and 12 has been acknowledged to suggest a four-part division (45:1–4, 5–7, 8–11, 12–15).³¹ Our focus will be on the first part in 47:1–4 that describes the initial humiliation of Babylon, employing the metaphors of undressing and nakedness. In the first verse, the female figure is asked to step down from her throne to sit on the earth, which symbolises her downfall from royal reign to the status

²⁹ The double designation as בְּתוּלַת בֵּית (“virgin daughter”) occurs several times as a name for different cities/nations; it can be assumed that the designation suggests neither family relations nor maidenhood, but stresses the youthfulness of the addressee, see Hermisson, *Deuterocesaja*, 169–170.

³⁰ The understanding of the text is uncertain here, and several emendations have been proposed: the MT reads a *Qal* form of the verb פָּגַע (“to meet someone”), which finds further confirmation in 1QIsa; the MT can be interpreted as not meeting resistance, an interpretation that also underlies the readings of Symmachus and Vulgate, both of which attest to a verb 3. Person Singular (= פָּגַעַי, “and no one can come pleading [with me]”). For a detailed discussion of the text see Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 715; Hermisson, *Deuterocesaja*, 148–149, or Berges, *Jesaja 40–48*, 477.

³¹ On this four-part structure see e.g. Hermisson, *Deuterocesaja*, 156, and Berges, *Jesaja*, 478–478; different models are proposed by Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 716 (six-part division: vv. 1–3, 4–5, 6–7, 8–9, 10–11, 12–15; similarly, Oswalt, *Isaiah*, 241), or Sals, *Biographie*, 300 (three-part structure: vv. 1–5, 6, 7–15).

of a mere slave girl (47:1).³² The following verse continues the imagery by assigning daughter Babylon the duties of a slave, who has to ground flour (47:2). The description is very detailed in describing how her social downfall is reflected in a three-stage divestment, stringing together three commands that carry an increasing sexual connotation.³³ The sequence starts in v. 47:2 with the command to fold back her veil (צִמְתֵּךְ); the garment צִמָּה has only few occurrences in the Hebrew Bible,³⁴ but can be identified with a veil that was used by female gentry to cover the head, framing the face.³⁵ In the command 47:2, the Hebrew verb גִּלָּה *pi^cel* refers to the veil as indirect object that needs to be removed for the purpose of uncovering something else, which implies that the woman's head and face will be laid bare,³⁶ depriving her from the veil as a status symbol. Next, the female figure has to strip off her skirts (47:2: חֲשָׁפֵי־שָׁבֶל), a formulation that again uses the verb גִּלָּה *pi^cel* to describe the garment as the object to remove. In the third command, however, the imperative גִּלִּי changes to denote the exposure of the body, commanding Babylon to uncover her legs (43:3: גִּלִּי־שׁוֹךְ). While the activities in 47:2 (grinding flour, wading through waters) could reasonably require some sort of undress on the female's part, the following imagery leaves no doubt that the stripping constitutes an act of sexual humiliation, a "prelude to rape".³⁷ The sexual abuse is described in v. 47:3, where the *niph^cal* jussive declaring that Babylon's nakedness shall be uncovered (תִּגְלַל עֶרְוֹתֶיךָ), draws on the sexual connotation of the verb גִּלָּה in combination with the noun עֶרְוָה,³⁸ and implies that the female will be sexually violated.³⁹ The passive formulation leaves open the identity of the perpetrator, but the avowal of the divine speaker that he will take revenge (43:3: וְנָקָם אֶקָּח), suggests that in the imagery of the

³² See already Duhm, *Jesaja*, 355; further Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 716.

³³ Similarly Berges, *Jesaja*, 484: "Dabei tritt die sexuelle Konnotation immer stärker zutage."

³⁴ See further Song 4:1, 3; 6:7.

³⁵ See Kersken, *Kleidung*, 161. Similarly, Baumann, *Gott*, 61, interprets the veil as a symbol of status.

³⁶ Baumann, *Love*, 49–50.

³⁷ Franzmann, "City," 12. The change of imagery from stripping to sexual violence in 47:3 has given cause to some literary critical operation, see p.e. Hermisson, *Deuterojesaja*, 158, 174, 191–192, who discards V 3–4 as secondary (see Hermisson, *Deuterojesaja*, 158: "Nun fällt aber V.3a bereits dadurch stilistisch und sachlich aus dem Zusammenhang, daß die metaphorischen Wendungen für die Erniedrigung der Königin zum geringen Mägdendienst in V.2 angesichts der 'Entblößung' unversehens die Assoziation von Schändung und Vergewaltigung hervorrufen."). This suggestion, however, takes the edge from the prophecy and assigns the problem to a later author, who "associated" humiliation and rape.

³⁸ On the use of גִּלָּה *pi^cel* to denote sexual intercourse see chap. 1.1 with FN 17; correspondingly, the *niph^cal binyan* of גִּלָּה in Isa 43:3 covers the passive sense; see Baumann, *Love*, 46–52.

³⁹ On this interpretation of Isa 47:3 see Baumann, *Love*, 195; Berges, *Jesaja* 40–48, 485.

metaphor, it is the husband himself, who will violate the female.⁴⁰ The end of the strophe in v. 47: 4 adds the chorus of the redeemed ones, who acknowledge Yhwh as the holy one.

To sum up, the judgement prophecy in Isa 47:1–4 operates with a clear correlation of clothing and nudity: clothing is a symbol of the woman's social class and offers protection, while nakedness stands for social downfall and defencelessness. Thus, depriving daughter Babylon of her clothing symbolises her humiliation from royal reign to a mere slave and exposes her to sexual abuse. Considering that the literary development in the Book of Deutero-Isaiah starts from the end of the Babylonian exile in 539 BCE, the oracle in Isa 47:1–4 belongs clearly into the post-exilic period and comprises reflections on the end of the Babylonian empire. The downfall of the capital city Babylon does, however, not correspond to the historic realities, but has to be understood as a literary counter-part to the salvation prophecies for Zion/Jerusalem in Isa 40–55(66).⁴¹ While an important part of the restoration of Zion/Jerusalem is her re-investiture with garments (see 52:1) demonstrating her renewed royal status, the downfall of Babylon is symbolised by depriving her of clothing and thus exposing her to sexual violence. Furthermore, it has been shown that the laments about the downfall of Zion/Jerusalem in Lam 1:8–10, 2:10 form the background for Isa 47 as a whole,⁴² adding to the depiction of the judgement against Babylon as a counterpart to Zion's fate.

1.4. Jeremiah 13:18–27

18 Say to the king and the queen mother: Take a lowly seat.

For from your head⁴³ has come down the crown of your glory.

⁴⁰ See Baumann, *Love*, 195; Franzmann, *City*, 13 (“Yhwh the warrior rapist takes inexorable vengeance against Babylon”). Berges argues that the jussive form of גַּלֵּה in 43:3 suggest an imagined situation (“eine imaginierte Situation”), which would make a *passivum divinum* unlikely (Berges, *Jesaja 40–48*, 485); yet this argument neglects that the whole oracle employs metaphorical speech and clearly presents Yhwh as the one who will implement the judgement; similarly Hermisson's argument that the foe is the natural subject of the violence carried out in 43:3 (Hermisson, *Deuterojesaja*, 192), disregards that Yhwh is presented as the initiator of the judgement and controls the action against Babylon.

⁴¹ Steck assumes that the restoration of Zion in the “imperative poem” Isa 51–54* already presupposes the oracle on the downfall of Babylon in Isa 47* (see Steck, “Beobachtungen,” 54–55, and Steck, “Zion,” 144); on the corresponding depiction of Zion see also Franke, “Function,” 416–418, and Sals, *Biographie*, 329.

⁴² On the links between Isa 47 and Lam 1:8–10: 2:10 see Tull Willey, *Remember*, 167–170; her observations are taken up by Baumann, *Love*, 182–183, arriving at the conclusion: “Jerusalem's (female) enemy encounters a fate as hard as the one she had formerly visited on Jerusalem” (Baumann, *ibid*, 183).

⁴³ The MT is “peculiar” (Craigie/Kelley/Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 188), however, the verse clearly suggests that king and queen mother are stripped off their regal power, which is reflected in the reading of the

- 19 The towns of the Negev are closed up, with no one to open.
All of Judah has been led into exile, it has been exiled completely (הַגָּלַת יְהוּדָה) (כָּלֶה הַגָּלַת שְׁלֹמִים).⁴⁴
- 20 Lift up your eyes and see those coming from the north.⁴⁵
Where is the flock that was given to you,
the flock of your glory?
- 21 What will you say when one will set over you as head,
those whom you have taught to be your confidants?⁴⁶
Will not pangs seize you like a woman in labour?
- 22 And when you say in your heart: Why have these things happened to me?
Because of the abundance of your iniquity have your skirt hems been lifted up,
and your heels have been violated (נִגְלִי שׁוּלְיִי נִחְמָסוּ עֲקֵבַי).⁴⁷
(...)
- 25 This is to be your lot, the portion I have measured out to you, says Yhwh,
because you have forgotten me and trusted in lies.

versions: these attest to the variant “from your head” (= מֵרֹאשְׁכֶם), which is adopted in the translation (similarly McKane, *Jeremiah*, 302, 304, and Craigie/Kelley/Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 187; however, Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 408, argues for a different vocalisation of the MT, resulting in the same meaning).

⁴⁴ While the verb הַגָּלַת is female, שְׁלֹמִים is masculine, explained by Joüon/Muraoka, *Grammar*, §150e, with the people being regarded as a collective.

⁴⁵ Reading the *K^etiv* for both imperatives (2. fem sg.: וְרָאִי, שְׂאִי), following the versions (see McKane, *Jeremiah*, 306–307; Craigie/Kelley/Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 187, 189; Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 411), while the *Q^{re}* can be explained as an assimilation to the previous verse, assuming a masculine subject (see Allen, *Jeremiah*, 162; Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 411). There remains, however, the incongruence of the initial imperative 2. fem. sg. שְׂאִי with the object עֵינֶיכֶם that carries a suffix 2. masc. pl., which then requires an emendation (see already Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 80; McKane, *Jeremiah*, 307; Craigie/Kelley/Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 189).

⁴⁶ The translation follows Craigie/Kelley/Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 187, 189, in transposing part of the verse; see already Weiser, *Jeremia*, 109.

⁴⁷ On the translation of the *hapax legomenon* חָמַס *niph^eal* as a passive (“to be violated”) to חָמַס *qal* see Gesenius¹⁷ (“to be treated violently”), while Gesenius¹⁸ (“to be bared”) and HALOT (“to be bared/to endure violence”) both assume a meaning in analogy to גָּלָה. However, Baumann, *Love*, 118–119, is right in pointing out that the meaning of גָּלָה is in itself disputed and should not be used to determine the understanding of חָמַס in Jer 13:22; she opts for the translation “violence is done to your body” in Jer 13:22, see further Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 411 (“your body ravished”); Craigie/Kelley/Drinkard, *Jeremiah*, 187 (“and your heels suffer violence”), and Schmid, *Buchgestalten*, 332 (“sind vergewaltigt deine Fersen”); differently, McKane, *Jeremiah*, 306 (“your shame shall be disclosed”), and Allen, *Jeremiah*, 162 (“and your nudity will be brought into shameful view”), seem to be guided by the idea of laying bare.

26 I myself will strip off your skirt hems over your face,⁴⁸ and your shame will be seen (חֲשַׁפְתִּי שׁוּלְיֶיךָ עַל־פָּנֶיךָ וְנִרְאָה קִלְוִיֶּךָ).

27 Your adulteries and you neighing, the infamy of your whoring (נְאֻפֵּיךָ וּמִצְהָלוֹתֶיךָ (זִמְתָּ זְנוּתֶיךָ),

on the hills, in the countryside, I have seen your abominations.

Woe to you, Jerusalem, you will not be clean, how much longer yet?

The prophecy Jer 13:18–27⁴⁹ divides into four oracles in 13:18–19, 20–22, 23–24, and 25–27, whereby vv. 25–27 resume the imagery of the shamed woman in vv. 20–22, suggesting an (original) connection between these two parts that are dominated by second feminine singular references (13:20–27*).⁵⁰ With regard to the other units, however, there is some evidence for a process of literary continuation (*Fortschreibung*): Jer 13:18–19 can be identified as the basic oracle announcing demise for king and queen mother (13:18), which is then related to the end of the southern kingdom of Judah: employing twice the *hoph'al binyan* of גָּלָה as *terminus technicus* for the exile,⁵¹ v. 13:19 states that the whole of Judah has been led into exile (הִגְלֹתָ יְהוּדָה כָּלָהּ הִגְלֹתָ שְׁלֹמֹמִים).

In the first continuation 13:20–27*,⁵² the focus changes to the fate of personified Zion/Jerusalem, only interrupted by the short oracle in vv. 23–24 that can be identified as a later insertion due to changes in topic and address.⁵³ Zion/Jerusalem is first called to lift up her eyes and witness the arrival of a group from the north (13:20), which recalls the advance of the foe from the north (Jer 4–6). She is then mocked for the loss of her flock and blamed for having forged her own destiny, as she instructed “confidants” (אֱלֻפִּים) that will now rule over her (13:21). Her punishment is in v. 22 described in no uncertain terms as a lifting up

⁴⁸ Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 412, deletes עַל־פָּנֶיךָ, arguing that it “overloads the colon and is unnecessary for the image”, but there is no manuscript evidence for this operation.

⁴⁹ See also Klein, “Uncovering” (see FN 2), on the analysis of Jer 13:18–27 and especially the exile references in the oracle.

⁵⁰ On the connection between 13:20–22 and 13:25–27 see –with different arguments, though – Rudolph, *Jeremiah*, 82–83; McKane, *Jeremiah*, 307.

⁵¹ See Kiefer, *Exil*, 124–127; also Zobel, “גָּלָה,” 478–479.

⁵² Schmid, *Buchgestalten*, 330–340, has furnished further proof for the assumption that 13:20ff. represents a later continuation of 13:18–19 by classifying 13:20–22 with a number of similar examples, in which the earlier prophecies in the book are later supplemented by adding theological commentaries and rationales, making the continuation part of a wider, conceptually-linked, redactional activity in the book.

⁵³ On the exclusion of 13:23–24 see Rudolph, *Jeremia*, 82–83, and McKane, *Jeremiah*, 307.

her skirt hems and violating her heels (נָגְלוּ שׁוּלְיָהָ נְחֻמָּסוּ עֲקֵבֶיהָ). The act of lifting up a woman's skirt hem has already in Nah 3:5 been identified as an image of sexual abuse. In Jer 13:22, the ensuing act of violating the woman's heels (נְחֻמָּסוּ עֲקֵבֶיהָ) – which is a clear euphemism for sexual violence⁵⁴ – shows that the metaphor of undressing serves similarly as a prelude for sexual abuse, depicting judgement. Due to the passive verb, it is unclear, who is the perpetrator of the violation in 13:22, yet the key is in the previous v. 13:21 that indicates that the woman got involved with “confidants” that she “taught herself” (וְאֵת לִמְדָתָּ (אֲתָם עָלֶיךָ אֲלָפִים). Firstly, the verb למד (“to teach”) is in Jeremiah used to describe that the people have forgotten Yhwh and became accustomed to transgressions and idolatries of the nations;⁵⁵ in particular, in Jer 2:33 Zion/Jerusalem is accused of having habitually (לַמִּדָּתִי)⁵⁶ looked for love. Secondly, the noun אֲלָפִי (“confidant”) in Jer 3:4 serves as a honorary title, with which the whore addresses Yhwh, when she ruefully returns to him. This suggests that the word in 13:21 denotes the woman's lovers, for whom she has initially left the divine husband. On the whole, the imagery in 13:22 should be interpreted against the background of the prophetic marriage metaphor, implying that Yhwh will expose Zion/Jerusalem to sexual violence by the hand of her former lovers, whom she foolishly mistook as confidants.⁵⁷

That the marriage metaphor stands in the background of the oracle is even more prominent in its second part 13:25–27, where Yhwh accuses the woman of adulteries (נְאוּפִים), neighing (מִצְהָלוֹת), and whoring (זְנוּת), drawing on central accusations against the female in previous chapters of the book (Jer 2–3) and giving her misbehaviour explicit sexual connotations.⁵⁸ In 13:26, the punishment of the woman through acts of sexual violence is continued, whereby the sequence of undressing and violation recurs. Different to 13:22, however,

⁵⁴ The heels (עֲקֵב) can be understood as an euphemism for the (female) genitals, see Gesenius¹⁷/Gesenius¹⁸; HALOT; Zobel, “עֲקֵב,” 315–320; Baumann, *Love*, 119–120. On the understanding of sexual violation see also Gordon/Washington, “Rape,” 316.

⁵⁵ See Jer 9:4, 13; 10:2; 12:16.

⁵⁶ On reading and interpretation see Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 56, 109–110.

⁵⁷ Differently, Baumann, *Love*, 120, interprets 13:22 with reference to the following v. 26, assuming that Yhwh himself is the perpetrator of sexual violence and not only the one initiating it.

⁵⁸ See Baumann, *Love*, 121–122.

it is now Yhwh himself, who strips the woman of her skirts (חֲשַׁפְתִּי שׁוּלְיָי עַל-פָּנָיִךְ) and exposes her to public humiliation (וַיִּרְאָה קְלוֹנֶיךָ).⁵⁹

To sum up, the application of clothing and nudity in Jer 13:20–27* corresponds very much to the pattern that we have already observed in Hos 2:4–17* and Nah 3:1–7*: clothing protects the woman, and being stripped naked exposes her to sexual humiliation and abuse. Thereby, the shared terminology suggests a close connection between Nah 3 and Jer 13, with the author of Jer 13:20–27* taking up the expressions גִּלָּה שׁוּל and רָאָה קְלוֹן (Nah 3:5; see Jer 13:22, 26), and supplementing these with the idea that the woman will be stripped off her skirts (13:26: חֲשַׁף שׁוּל); here, the use of the verb חֲשַׁף recalls Isa 47:2. However, the prophecy in Jeremiah does not only differ from Nah 3 and Isa 47 in that the threat is addressed at Zion/Jerusalem and not at foreign cities, but the judgement has also a distinct allegorical dimension. Continuing the original oracle in Jer 13:18–19 that focuses on the exile of Judah and the loss of political power, 13:20–27* employs metaphorical speech to depict the exile in terms of sexual violence against the woman Zion/Jerusalem. It is especially the different use of the Hebrew verb גִּלָּה in the productive growth of 13:18ff. that demonstrates the re-interpretation of exile in terms of sexual violence: While in the original oracle 13:18–19, גִּלָּה *hoph^cal* denotes how Judah was led into the Babylonian exile (13:19: הִגְלִיתָ יְהוּדָה כָּלָה הִגְלִיתָ שְׁלֹמִים), the author of the continuation in 13:20–27* employs the *niph^cal binyan* (13:22: נִגְלִי שׁוּלִיךְ) to use sexual violence as an image of exile.⁶⁰

1.5. Clothing and Nudity in Ezekiel

1.5.1. Ezekiel 16

36 Thus says the Lord Yhwh: Because your juice was poured out (יָצַן הַשֶּׁפֶךְ נְחֻשְׁתְּךָ),⁶¹
and you uncovered your nakedness in your whorings with your lovers (הִשְׁפָּךְ

⁵⁹ Baumann, *Love*, 121, argues that the use of the noun קְלוֹן in 13:26 “at the very least possesses sexual connotations”, yet the punitive act seems to aim at public humiliation rather than sexual violation; see Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 416; Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 303 (“the figure is one of exposure”).

⁶⁰ See on this Klein, “Uncovering” (see FN 2).

⁶¹ The understanding of the expression הַשֶּׁפֶךְ נְחֻשְׁתְּךָ is difficult, as first the meaning of the noun נְחֻשֶׁת is uncertain (HALAT proposes “modesty, shame, menstruation”, see accordingly Gesenius¹⁸); furthermore, most exegetes follow the Targum variant in assuming the infinitive הִשְׁפָּךְ (“to strip off”) instead of the MT reading הִשְׁפָּךְ (“to be poured out”), thus arriving at a reading “you uncovered your shame”, which constitutes a parallel to the following expression (see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 330; similar Pohlmann, *Hesekiel 1–19*, 218). However,

- וְהַשְׂתִּיד וְהַגִּלָּה עֲרוֹתֶיךָ בְּתִזְנוּתֶיךָ עַל־מֵאֲהָבֶיךָ and with all the idols of your abomination, and because of the blood of your children that you gave to them,
- 37 therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers, with whom you took pleasure, and all those which you hated. I will gather them against you from all around, and I will uncover your nakedness to them (וְגִלִּיתִי עֲרוֹתֶיךָ אֲלֵהֶם), so that they may see your whole nakedness (וְרָאוּ אֶת־כָּל־עֲרוֹתֶיךָ).
- 38 And I will judge you according to the laws of women who commit adultery and those, who shed blood (וְשִׁפְטִיתִיךָ מִשְׁפָּטֵי נְאֻפּוֹת וְשִׁפְכַת דָּם), and I will bring upon you blood of rage and zeal.
- 39 And I will deliver you in their hand, and they shall throw down your platform and tear down your high places. They shall strip you off your clothes (וְהִפְשִׁיטוּ וְאֹתָךְ בְּגָדֶיךָ), and take your beautiful objects, and they shall leave you lying there, naked and bare (עֵרִים וְעָרְיָה).⁶²

In chapter Ezekiel 16, Jerusalem is described in an “extended metaphor”⁶³ as an abandoned baby girl, whom Yhwh first rescues and then marries, once she has come of age. Even though the woman is richly blessed by her husband, she develops a nymphomaniac attraction to other lovers and is punished severely for her misbehaviour. The whole chapter comprises a continuous address of the woman by Yhwh, associating the context of a judicial speech,⁶⁴ in which the husband accuses his wife of adultery and adjudicates judgement. As the female’s fate represents biblical history, explaining the exile as punishment for the unfaithfulness of Israel and Judah, the character of the chapter is mainly understood as an allegory.⁶⁵

an Akkadian cognate to the noun, referring to some sort of “genital outflow” allows to interpret the text as it stands (Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 285–286: “your juice was poured out”; see also Baumann, *Love*, 137: “your ore was poured out”; with reference to the Akkadian cognate see also euphemistically Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 225: “your sexual profligacy has been so lavishly demonstrated”, 230, and Block, *Ezekiel 1–24*, 498: “your passion was poured out”).

⁶² The predicative nouns are used adjectivally here; see Joüon/Muraoka, *Grammar*, §154a; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 277; Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 227.

⁶³ Shields, “Multiple Exposuress,” 5; Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 233; Galambush, *Jerusalem*, 11.

⁶⁴ On this genre characteristics in Ezek 16 see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 333, 335.

⁶⁵ It is usually acknowledged that Ezek 16 assembles different form elements, whereby, however, the character of metaphorical speech and the overall form of an allegory stand out; see e.g. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 333–336; Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 232–235; Pohlmann, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 221; Lipka, *Sexual Transgression*, 223. On the allegorical character of Ezek 16 see especially Krüger, *Geschichtskonzepte*, 139–198

The present chapter divides into three parts. Following the word-introduction formula in v. 16:1, the first part in 16:1–43 comprises the basic oracle that deals with the fate of the adulterous wife Jerusalem; it has later been supplemented with the fate of her sisters Sodom and Gomorrah in 16:44–58, and a prospect of salvation in 16:59–63.⁶⁶ However, there is also evidence to suggest that the basic oracle in 16:1–43 contains later additions;⁶⁷ it is especially the question what the woman is accused of originally that gives rise to literary-critical operations. Both Zimmerli and Pohlmann reconstruct an original text, in which the accusations against the wife remain general, charging her with harlotry and unfaithfulness, while they deem the specific charges of cultic (16:16–21) and political infidelity (16:26, 28–29) to be later supplementations.⁶⁸ However, as the most significant mentions of clothing, nudity, and shame can be matched with what is generally assumed to be the original layer, I will refrain from further literary-critical discussion in this case.

In 16:1–43, the ideas of clothing and nudity figure as opposites, implying protection and vulnerability of the female in different stages of her life. In childhood (16:1–14), the lack of swaddling clothes signifies the abandonment of the infant and the repugnance of its life (16:4–5), which moves Yhwh to take pity on her and command her to live (16:6). Under his protection and care, the baby girl grows into a pubescent woman, but the nominal statement at the end of 16:7 (וְאֵת עֶרְוַת וְעֶרְיָהּ) shows that the perception of her nakedness has changed significantly. While the infant's nakedness left the baby girl exposed and without protection, the pubescent's nakedness implicates the danger of this status, as nudity in the following is associated with sexual lewdness and shamelessness, and considered to be a sign of a harlotrous condition.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ On the general three-part structure see e.g. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 333–336; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 292–296; Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 232–235.

⁶⁷ See already Gustav Hölscher, who regarded the whole chapter as “one of the longest, and with view to literary criticism, one of the most difficult ones” (Hölscher, *Hesekiel*, 92: “das längste im Buch und literarkritisch besonders schwierig”).

⁶⁸ See Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 333–353 (followed by Maier, *Jerusalem*, 89–101), and Pohlmann, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 216–234; similarly Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 232–235. While in general, the three-part development represents a certain consensus in scholarship, Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 305, applies a holistic approach and labels Ezek 16 “a single great movement from start to finish of this long oracle”.

⁶⁹ See Block, *Ezekiel 1–24*, 482; he further concludes: “With the passing of the age of innocence and the arrival of sexual maturity, nakedness assumes moral overtones. Whereas the earlier nakedness had made the foundling vulnerable to the elements and marauding animals, now she stands exposed to dangers of a different sort”.

In the logic of the text, this possible threat is resolved for now, when Yhwh passes by and realises that the woman's time has come for "love" (16:8: וְאַתָּה עֵרָם וְעָרִיָּה); here, the Hebrew text provides us with sufficient evidence to suggest that Yhwh takes the woman to be his wife and most likely consummates the marriage.⁷⁰ The act of covering her nudity with the skirt of his garment (וְאַפְרָשׁ כְּנָפִי עָלֶיךָ וְאַכְסָה עֲרוֹתֶיךָ) is at first glance an act of protectiveness and the declaration to provide for her, but the divine husband also symbolically takes possession of the woman and thus gains control over her sexuality. The following part in 16:9–14 describes how he discharges his marital commitments and lavishly endows his wife with expensive garments and the finest jewellery. The embroidered cloth (6:10, 11: רִקְמָה), the luxury leather or dolphin skin (6:10: תַּחֲשׁ), byssus (6:10, 11: שֵׁשׁ) and silk (6:10, 11: מָשִׁי) are all luxury garments and represent the woman's newly royal status. Furthermore, each of these materials occur also in the priestly description of the desert sanctuary, while the food that is offered to the woman in Ezek 16 figures prominently in the sacred offerings.⁷¹ "In short, Jerusalem, the bride of Yahweh, is clothed with the garments that 'clothe' the sanctuary and is fed with the 'food' of its offerings."⁷² The description emphasises, though, that the woman is "fit to be a queen" (16:14: וְהַצֵּלְחִי לְמְלוּכָה) only by the grace and provisions of her husband; she even owes him her beauty, which is made perfect only because of the splendour that Yhwh had endowed on her (16:15). In this way, her provision with jewellery and clothing can also be understood as a means to demonstrate the husband's control over his wife.⁷³

It is the woman's misconception, failing to recognise the nature of the relationship and trying to break away from her husband's control, that changes the picture of marital bliss into that of a broken marriage. Instead of being faithful to the husband, the female figure bestows her sexual favours on everyone, who passes by (16:15), and her sexual desire even leads to a perverted praxis of prostitution – the woman pays her lovers instead of accepting

⁷⁰ On the marriage imagery in Ezek 16:8 see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 229; Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 238; Block, *Ezekiel 1–25*, 482–483; on the implication of sexual activity see Shields, "Multiple Exposures," 14–15, and Day, *Violence*, 208.

⁷¹ On the luxury character of the materials and their use in the texts about the desert sanctuary see in detail Bender, *Sprache*, 57–59, 65–66, 242; further Kersken, *Töchter Zions*, 21–22, 32, 35.

⁷² Block, *Ezekiel 1–24*, 485–486; see already Galambush, *Jerusalem*, 95, and Maier, "Jerusalem," 92.

⁷³ Thus Shields, "Multiple Exposures," 10.

payment herself in exchange for sexual intercourse (16:33–34). A presumably later author adds insult to the adultery, as the woman misuses her husband’s provisions to build “colourful heights” (16:16: בְּמִזֵּת טֵלְאוֹת) for her adulterous acts, and to clothe and feed the concrete images of men she made herself (16:18–21).⁷⁴

The original announcement of judgement in 16:35–43 is from the start formulated with specific reference to the alleged “crimes” of the female figure, employing her nakedness as an image of judgement: because the woman uncovered her nakedness to her lovers (16:36: וַתְּגַלֶּה עֲרוּתָהּ), the husband will uncover her nakedness for everyone to see (16:37: וְגִלִּיתִי (עֲרוּתָהּ)). The text operates here within the scheme of cause and effect,⁷⁵ suggesting a retributive punishment, which is confirmed in 16:38, where the mention of the “laws” serves to legitimise the punitive action of the husband.⁷⁶ However, this is not a question about dressing and undressing, but both the specific use of the Hebrew verb גלה in the *pi^cel binyan* (16:37) and the context are evidence that the punishment goes beyond a simple stripping. First, the act of stripping is mentioned separately in 16:37b and 16:39, where the woman is undressed with the intention of exposing her nakedness, thus humiliating her.⁷⁷ Secondly – as mentioned before – the combination of גלה *pi^cel* with the noun עֲרוּה clearly denotes sexual intercourse,⁷⁸ and if this understanding is applied on Ezek 16:37, the metaphor describes sexual intercourse that is forced upon the woman by the divine husband himself.⁷⁹

Later authors introduce the vocabulary of shame (כְּלֻמָּה/בוש) as a category to understand the scenes of marriage in their additions to the text. In 16:52, the figure Jerusalem is asked to bear her humiliation (כְּלֻמָּה) and to be ashamed (בוש), as she had surpassed her sisters in her misbehavior (see also 16:54). Similarly, the promise to establish an everlasting covenant with

⁷⁴ On the secondary character of these verses see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 343, and Pohlmann, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 230–231.

⁷⁵ See Krüger, *Geschichtskonzepte*, 188–196; Stiebert, *Construction*, 146, 160.

⁷⁶ Thus Baumann, *Love*, 155.

⁷⁷ On this argument see Baumann, *Love*, 155.

⁷⁸ See above the argument in chapters 1.1. and 1.3, and especially FN 16.

⁷⁹ On this understanding see Shields, “Multiple Exposures,” 15–16; Baumann, *Love*, 154–155; more tentatively, Lipka, *Sexual Transgression*, 152, who argues with regard to 16:37: “Thus the pairing of ‘nakedness’ and ‘uncover’ here might imply rape” and then suggests that 16:39 describes how the woman will be gang-raped by her former lovers. However, even though the terminological parallels to the texts in Leviticus are widely recognised, most exegetes interpret 16:37 as an act of exposing for the purpose of humiliation, see e.g. Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 342 (legal punishment for adulterers); Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 286 (public degradation of a harlot); Block, *Ezekiel 1–24*, 501–502 (a divorce ritual).

the woman in 16:62 is followed by the call never to open her mouth again because of her shame (16:63: *מִפְּנֵי כָל־מַתִּיד*). The “theological problem” in 16:63 that Jerusalem feels shame only after God has forgiven her and provided for a new beginning, has attracted remarkable few attention.⁸⁰ It has been interpreted against the background of a complaint ritual, ending in shame as the result of self-recognition,⁸¹ however, it seems more likely that shame together with being silenced denotes the culmination of the divine punishment, leaving the woman humbled and voiceless.⁸²

To sum up, the presumably oldest version of the metaphorical speech in Ezek 16:1–43* uses the images of clothing and nudity in an allegorical review of biblical history. Therein, the metaphor of the woman can be understood in a narrow sense as symbolizing Zion/Jerusalem, which, however relates to the people/the nation as a whole. While the covering of the baby girl’s nakedness is a protective act that symbolizes the election of Israel in its beginnings, the lavish provision of luxury goods for the wife is an image for the prospering during nationhood. Finally, in an interpretative move similar to Jer 13:18–27, the exposing of the wife’s nakedness and her sexual violation symbolize the destruction of Jerusalem and the ensuing exile, interpreted as a rightful divine punishment for Israel’s iniquities.⁸³ The later supplementations in 16:44–58 and 16:59–63 introduce shame vocabulary and contribute to understanding the preceding events against the background of honour and shame. By her adulterous misbehavior, the woman has shamed the honour of her husband, who rightfully punishes her to reestablish his honour and to shame the woman into silence.

1.5.2. Ezekiel 23

- 10 These uncovered her nakedness (*גִּלּוּ עֶרְוֹתָהּ*); her sons and her daughters they seized, and her they killed with the sword. And she became notorious to other women, and judgement had been executed upon her.

(...)

⁸⁰ Thus argues Stiebert, *Construction*, 155.

⁸¹ See the interpretation of Odell, “Inversion,” 101–112.

⁸² Similarly, Stiebert, *Construction*, 159. She employs the category of “antilanguage” to describe the use of sexual imagery in Ezekiel in order to evoke the realization of defilement and shame (see Stiebert, *Construction*, 151–161).

⁸³ See Zimmerli, *Ezekiel I*, 348–349.

18 When she uncovered her whorings and exposed her nakedness (תִּגְלַת תְּזִנּוּתֶיהָ וְתִגְלַת אֶת-עֲרוּתָהּ), I turned away from her, as I had turned away from her sister.
(...)

29 And they shall deal with you in hatred, and they shall take away all the products of your labour, and they will leave you bare and naked (וְעִזְבוּךָ עֵירִים וְעָרִיה). And your whorish shame shall be uncovered (וְנִגְלָהּ⁸⁴ עֲרוּת זְנוּנֶיךָ)⁸⁵ ...⁸⁵.

In many ways, the second metaphorical speech in Ezek 23 corresponds to the pattern outlined with regard to its counterpart in Ezek 16, similarly employing the marriage metaphor for an allegorical review of biblical history. This time, however, we deal with two women, namely the sisters Oholah and Oholibah, who represent the two capital cities of the northern and southern kingdom, Samaria and Jerusalem. Furthermore, Yhwh addresses only Oholibah starting in 23:21, while the preceding parts represent a divine discourse about the women, addressed to the prophet (23:1). The whole chapter can be divided into three parts, starting from the sisters' time of harlotry in Egypt (23:1–4), while the second and third part deal with the sisters in turn, starting with the infidelity of Oholah in 23:5–10, and then focusing on Oholibah in 23:11–49. However, there is some agreement that the original oracle is confined to 23:1–27, while the further speech units following in 23:28–49 represent later additions.⁸⁶ In the following, we will thus deal with the later supplementations only in so far as they contribute to the idea of clothing and nudity in ch. Ezek 23.

Different to the account in Ezek 16, the storyline in Ezek 23 skips the women's childhood and starts from their time of "harlotry" in Egypt (23:1: וְתִזְנֶינָה בְּמִצְרַיִם), before both of them become the wives of Yhwh (23:1–4). The following part in 23:5–10 deals with the infidelity of Oholah, describing her as acting promiscuously both with the Assyrians (23:5–7) and the Egyptians (23:8), for which Yhwh punishes her by delivering her to her lovers. Not only do

⁸⁴ Following most commentators, the perfect consecutivum masculine singular (וְנִגְלָהּ) should be emended to a feminine singular (וְנִגְלָתָהּ), assuming a scribal omission, even though we do not have material evidence for this reading (see Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 476; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 483; Pohlmann, *Ezekiel 20–48*, 337).

⁸⁵ The construct relation עֲרוּת זְנוּנֶיךָ is followed by the substantives "your depravity and your whoring (וְזִמְתְּךָ וְזִמְנוּתְךָ)", but following Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 476; Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, 42, 44, and Pohlmann, *Ezekiel 20–48*, 337, these nouns should be read as the opening of the following verse.

⁸⁶ See Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 480–481; Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, 45–48; Pohlmann, *Hesekiel 20–48*, 336–340; similar also, Krüger, *Geschichtskonzepte*, 143, who assumes an original core in 23:1–30.

the Assyrians take away her children and finally kill her, but before that, they assault the female sexually by uncovering her nakedness (23:10: גִּלּוֹ עֲרוּתָהּ). Again, the specific use of the verb גִּלָּה *pi^cel* in combination with the noun עֲרוּה suggests that the text describes how Oholah is exposed to gang-rape by the hands of her former lovers. However, Ezek 23:10 differs from the account in Ezek 16 in the role that Yhwh plays himself: he is no longer “the one who directly performs the rape, but ‘only’ the judge who passes sentence on the ‘woman’ Jerusalem and leaves the carrying out of the punishment to the ex-lovers”.⁸⁷ In Oholah’s story, there is remarkable few embellishment of the marriage relationship and clothing plays only a minor part, as it is among other things the violet purple-coloured garments (23:6: לְבָשֵׁי תְּכֵלֶת)⁸⁸ that attract the woman to the Assyrian warriors.

Rather, the main focus of the chapter is on the second sister, Oholibah, who – even though she has been a witness to her sister’s fate (23:11) – follows the same path and even surpasses Oholah in her “chronic nymphomania”⁸⁹ (23:11–12). She engages with different groups of males, symbolising the consecutive involvements with foreign nations in biblical history. First, Oholibah is filled with desire for the handsome young Assyrians and – like her sister – she is attracted by their magnificent uniforms (23:12: לְבָשֵׁי מְכָלֹל).⁹⁰ Later, however, she is drawn to the Babylonians after seeing them portrayed on wall paintings with their belts around the waist and turbans on their head (23:15), before she resumes the love affair of her youth with the Egyptians, whose bodily attractions are described in sexually unambiguous terms (23:18–21). Furthermore, the formulation in 23:18 that she uncovered her nakedness (וַתְּגַלֵּ אֶת-עֲרוּתָהּ) in the course of her interaction with them, features a parallel to the specific use of the verb גִּלָּה together with the noun עֲרוּה in 16:36–37⁹¹ and suggests that Oholibah’s adultery is consummated by sexual intercourse. This act of adultery is the final reason for Yhwh to turn from her, as he had turned from her sister before (23:18: נָקַע).

⁸⁷ Baumann, *Love*, 159.

⁸⁸ The noun תְּכֵלֶת denotes the extremely valuable violet purple that is also used for the coat covering the Ephod (Exod 28:21; 39:22) and a cover shielding the shrine on transport (Numb 4:6); see in detail Bender, *Sprache*, 59–60.

⁸⁹ Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, 42, who uses this expression as a heading for the chapter Ezek 23 as a whole.

⁹⁰ Here, the Syriac reads “purple” as in 23:6, which is clearly a later assimilation to Oholah’s storyline.

⁹¹ See the argument on Ezek 16:36–37 in the preceding chapter.

With v. 23:21, the speech changes to a direct address of Oholibah, in which the divine husband announces his judgement. The punitive measures in vv. 23:22–34 represent a reversal of the woman’s promiscuous activities and divide into three parts, of which, however, only the punishment in 23:22–27 belongs to the basic oracle outlined above. Here, the husband announces that he will send her former lovers against the female, whom he empowers as instruments of his indignation (23:15) to judge the woman “according to their laws” (23:24: וּשְׁפֹטוּהָ). The former lovers will facially mutilate the female (23:25), and strip her off her clothes and her jewelry (23:26: וְהִפְשִׁיטוּהָ אֶת-בְּגָדֶיהָ וְלָקְחוּ כָּלִי תַפְאֲרֶתָהּ). The addition of a second oracle in 23:28–30 carries forward the punitive action of 23:22–27 and enters into a description of sexual abuse: The divine husband first repeats that the woman’s former lovers will seize all her property and possessions, so that she will be left bare and naked (23:29: עֵרִים וְעֶרְיָה), thus taking up a *leitmotif* from Ezek 16 (see 16:7, 22, 39). Yet this punitive act is continued with the announcement that the woman’s whorish shame will be exposed (23:29: וְנִגְלָה עֶרְוֹת זְנוּנֶיהָ). As a passive, the *niph^cal* form of גִּלָּה in 23:29 does not by itself indicate, who is carrying out the act of punishment, but the context suggests strongly that the female figure is violated by her ex-lovers, on the command of her divine husband. Different to the parallel verses in 16:36–37 and 23:10, however, the noun עֶרְיָה occurs as a construct together with the absolute זְנוּנִים (“prostitution”).⁹² While it has been suggested that the expression גִּלָּה עֶרְוָה in this case refers to the genitals as the seat of shame, rather than being a euphemism for sexual intercourse,⁹³ to my mind, the parallel use of גִּלָּה *niph^cal* in 16:36 suggests a similar understanding of 23:29. Thus, the formulation indicates that – in a perversion of Oholibah’s previous sexual promiscuity – she will be gang-raped by her former lovers, whom the husband has gathered around her.⁹⁴ This reading can also be supported by the argument that it fulfils the (implicit) expectation that

⁹² Lipka, *Sexual Transgression*, 234, appropriately comments that the meaning “is not entirely clear”.

⁹³ Thus argues Baumann, *Love*, 159: “Here, unlike in 16:37 and 23:10, עֶרְוָה probably refers to the genitals. The word is more specifically qualified by the substantives for “whoredom” (זִמָּה, זִמָּוֶה, and זִמָּוֶת) ... so frequently used by Ezekiel, and indeed is more or less saddled with being the organ in which everything shameful is gathered together and can be looked upon.”

⁹⁴ See Lipka, *Sexual Transgression*, 234.

Oholibah will suffer the same punishment as her sister (23:10); an expectation that finds confirmation in the later supplementation of the Song of the Cup (23:31–34): as Oholibah followed the path of her sister, she will have to endure the same punishment (23:31).

To sum up, the metaphorical speech in Ezek 23 shares major characteristics with ch. Ezek 16 such as employing the marriage metaphor for an allegorical review of biblical history, and referring to a model of retributive judgement, when the sexual humiliation and violation of the female figure is directly linked to her previous adulterous behaviour. However, there are some differences. First, the allegory in Ezek 23 is much more elaborated, allowing for a clear interpretation of the adulterous acts as metaphors for the events that – in the eyes of the biblical authors – led to the demise of the two kingdoms of Israel (722 BCE) and Judah (587 BCE).⁹⁵ In this imagery, both the Assyrian and the Babylonian exile are described in terms of sexual violence, to which the divine husband exposes his wives. Yet the marriage metaphor in Ezek 23 is less detailed, skipping the initial care and provision of the husband for his wives and focusing on their transgressions instead.⁹⁶ Thus, clothing in Ezek 23 plays a rather minor role and only appears as an image of judgement, when Oholibah is stripped off her clothing (23:26), which leaves her naked and bare, and exposes her to sexual humiliation and violence. Apparently, the reader is supposed to fill these gaps by assuming the marriage relations in Ezek 16, which together with the higher systematisation in Ezek 23 suggests that the chapter is a later continuation of the allegorical speech in Ezek 16.

2. The Conceptual Framework: Honour and Shame

After having discussed the five examples from the Latter Prophets, in which clothing and nudity appear as images of judgement, it is now time to shed light on the conceptual framework of honour and shame that can contribute to our understanding of these texts. The anthropological codes of honour and shame have proved to be a useful model to assess social

⁹⁵ See Krüger, *Geschichtskonzepte*, 139–195; Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19*, 234–244; Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, 48–52; Pohlmann, *Ezechiel 20–48*, 339–340, and Baumann, *Gottesbilder*, 115–117.

⁹⁶ On the different form of the marriage metaphor in Ezek 23 compared with Ezek 16 see especially Stienstra, *YHWH*, 155–161.

relationships in the texts of the Hebrew Bible.⁹⁷ As a mainly group-oriented society, Israel shared in the conventions of honour and shame that prevailed in the Mediterranean cultures, and even though honour/shame vocabulary is mainly absent in the prophetic texts discussed, the texts can be shown to draw on these anthropological codes. While honour can be defined as the “appreciation of one’s own value and worth that is publicly acknowledged by others”, shame denotes correspondingly “a low estimation of oneself caused by failure to meet certain agreed social standards”.⁹⁸ This emotional response of shame can be linked to the social sanction of shaming as the action that causes the feeling of shame and controls behaviour in a group-oriented society.⁹⁹

As honour and shame are closely linked with sexual relations and gender roles, the marriage metaphor allowed the biblical authors to transfer existing cultural preconceptions about appropriate male and female behaviour onto the relationship between Yhwh and a female figure, and to reflect on Israel’s sin and punishment.¹⁰⁰ In the same way that a wife, who commits adultery, destroys the honour of her husband by impugning his masculinity,¹⁰¹ Israel has shamed Yhwh by worshipping other gods and entering into political alliances with foreign nations. And in the same way that a shamed husband has certain powers of control over his wife to re-establish his honour, the divine husband exposes his metaphorical wife to shame as a punishment for the people’s idolatries and their political follies. With the exception of Babylon in Isa 47, all the female figures are accused of adultery, amplified to a nymphomaniac frenzy in the Book of Ezekiel, which suggests in the logic of the biblical authors that the females have brought the punishment on their own head. In particular, the mention of laws in both Ezek 16:38 and 23:45 shows that the ancient authors have tried to paint the picture of a retributive judgement.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ See Brayford, “Shame,” 163; further Bechtel, “Shame,” 47–76; Stiebert, *Construction*, 25–86, Hadijev, “Honor,” 333–338; and with regard to the history of research on Ezekiel, Wu, *Honour*, 5–56.

⁹⁸ Hadijev, “Honor,” 333; on this definition see further Bechtel, “Shame,” 48–49.

⁹⁹ See Bechtel, “Shame,” 48–49.

¹⁰⁰ See Hadijev, “Honor,” 337.

¹⁰¹ See Delaney, “Seeds of Honor,” 40–43; Giovannini, “Chastity Codes,” 68; Stone, *Sex*, 44, 142–144.

¹⁰² It has frequently been pointed out that the texts employing the marriage metaphor operate within the scheme of cause and effect, thus portraying the punishment of the adulterous wife as an example of retributive justice; see e.g. Krüger, *Geschichtskonzepte*, 188–192; Baumann, *Love*, 143; Stiebert, *Construction*, 146, 160; Lipka, *Sexual Transgression*, 153.

However, while punitive acts such as facial mutilation (Ezek 23:25) or stoning (23:47) are documented occasionally as punishment for adultery,¹⁰³ the excessive sexual humiliation and abuse, culminating in the act of rape, are without parallel and stretch the metaphorical image. I want to suggest that this can be explained with the allegorical function of the marriage metaphor that was devised to reflect on biblical history. It is especially the historical trauma of the capture of Jerusalem in 587 BCE and the ensuing exile that occasioned wide part of the prophetic literature and lie at the core of the marriage metaphor.¹⁰⁴ To demonstrate the traumatic effect of these historical events, the biblical authors have supplemented the marriage metaphor with further imagery. First of all, the motif of undressing has also a background in military warfare, where it was common practice to strip captives off their protective clothing, and to expose them to shame in order to gain control over them.¹⁰⁵ Thus, exposing the nakedness of the women in the prophetic texts functions as an image for the shame of military defeat and especially the destruction of Jerusalem.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, the violence against a female figure has its roots in the fact that cities in the west-Semitic region were female and could be personified, and especially the Mesopotamian genre of city lament employed violence against city and city goddess as a means to depict military action and destruction.¹⁰⁷ Thus, to a certain degree, the violence against the women in the prophetic marriage metaphor can be understood as a transformation of the figure of the violated female in the Mesopotamian city laments: the specific metaphorical quality of the idea of personification allowed the audience of the prophetic texts to emphasise with the female, and to identify with the judgement against her.¹⁰⁸ It is because the readership understood that such acts of violence were devastating for the female victim, that the depiction

¹⁰³ See Baumann, *Gottesbilder*, 118.

¹⁰⁴ See Klein, "Uncovering"; further Baumann, *Love*, 228, and Baumann, *Gottesbilder*, 123.

¹⁰⁵ See Bechtel, "Shame," 62–67; Baumann, *Gottesbilder*, 117–120.

¹⁰⁶ Similarly Stiebert, *Construction*, 101–102.

¹⁰⁷ On the religious-historical background see Fitzgerald, *Mythological Background*, 403–416; Biddle, "Figure," 173–194; Steck, "Zion," 126–145; Maier, "Jerusalem," 87–88; Wischnowsky, *Tochter Zion*, 13–45, 266.

¹⁰⁸ See also the concluding remarks by Wischnowsky, *Tochter Zion*, 166–272, 272–274; in his study, he demonstrates convincingly that the figure of daughter Zion in the Hebrew Bible should be understood as a transformation of motifs connected with the city goddess in the ANE city laments.

is powerful and can demonstrate the disastrous effect of especially the events in 587 BCE and the ensuing exile that destroyed the core of city, land, and nation.

It is easy to understand why the prophetic texts dealing with clothing, nudity, and shame in the context of the marriage metaphor have attracted various criticism, pertaining the problematic nature of the depiction of violence, or the use of fixed gender roles that differ decisively from our present understanding.¹⁰⁹ However, it should be stressed that these texts are not intended to comment on or give guidance on gender or marriage relations, but they use the motifs of marriage and sexual violence as literary devices to process the traumatic events in the history of Israel. It is finally noteworthy that the use of the marriage metaphor in these texts pertains to the people of Israel as a whole, and – considering that the political and religious leadership was predominantly male – one can even suggest that they were written for a male readership. These men were called to experience in their relationship to their God a type of shame that on a purely social level is appropriate only for females.¹¹⁰ The texts can thus be appreciated as theological coping strategies of their times, but only after deconstructing the images of sexual violence as a metaphor for biblical history.

3. A Diachronic View on Clothing, Nudity, and Shame

It has been shown that there are a number of prophetic texts in the Hebrew Bible that use the ideas of clothing and nudity in the context of prophetic judgement oracles (Hos 2; Nah 3; Isa 47; Jer 13; Ezek 16, 23). Against the background of the marriage metaphor, clothing is part of the divine husband's provision for his wife and serves to cover her nudity, preserving her from being shamed. Correspondingly, the deprivation of clothing as a punitive measure against the adulterous wife exposes her to shame and sexual violation, re-establishing the honour of the divine husband, when he regains control in shaming and even violating the female. It could further be shown that the use of the metaphor is a means of historical interpretation, reflecting on the demise of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah (722

¹⁰⁹ See exemplary the review of scholarship in Baumann, *Love*, 7–26.

¹¹⁰ See Hadjiev, “Honor,” 337. Van Dijk-Hemmes, “Metaphorization,” 169, in her study on Ezek 23 also emphasizes that the intended audience is “males and at least indirectly also females”, requiring both sexes to identify with the two women.

BCE and 587 BCE), and the ensuing exile(s) as a rightful punishment for the people's transgressions. A literary assessment of the texts' relationship is still pending and cannot be undertaken in full within the scope of this article, but the preceding observations allow for some basic conclusions.¹¹¹

There is some agreement that the beginnings of the marriage metaphor can be found in the book of Hosea, where the deprivation of clothing and the sexual abuse of the wife (2:4–17) are firstly employed to depict the disruption between Yhwh and the land/his people. In a second step, it can be assumed that the elaboration of the marriage metaphor in the book of Hosea is used as a blueprint to announce judgement against foreign nations in Isa 47:1–4 and Nah 3:1–7*. Even though there is no marital relationship between the foreign cities and Yhwh, the texts employ the imagery of clothing and nudity to announce judgement against a female figure. Apparently, the use of the marriage metaphor in Hos 2 as a vehicle of judgement prophecy had proved so powerful that the ancient reader was expected to decipher the images of judgement in Isa 47 and Nah 3 correctly, even if the underlying relationship did not fit the metaphor.

A clear case, to my mind, constitutes the multi-layered oracle of judgement in Jer 13:18–27 that draws on terminology of both Nah 3 and Isa 47.¹¹² The author of the literary continuation in Jer 13:20–27* first draws on imagery of Nah 3, when the divine husband announces that the woman's skirts will be lifted as a precursor to sexual violation (13:22: גלה שול, see Nah 3:5), followed by shameful exposure (13:26: ראה קלון, see Nah 3:5). In a variation of the motif, the judgement in Jer 13:26 further provides that the divine husband will strip off the woman's skirt hems himself, recalling the terminology in Isa 47:2 (13:26: חשף שול, see Isa 47:2: חשף שבל). The most significant development in the interpretation of Jer 13, however, is the clear identification of sexual violence as an image of exile. By means

¹¹¹ There are some authors discussing the relationship between the prophetic texts dealing with clothing and nudity in the Prophets. For example, Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 298–299, argues for a relative chronology Hosea – Ezekiel/Jeremiah, while Baumann, “Soldat,” 63, arrives at a sequence Hosea 1–3 – Jeremiah 13 – Isaiah 47; see further her detailed summary in Baumann, *Love*, 223–228.

¹¹² Similarly, Baumann, “Gott,” 63.

of the *Wiederaufnahme* of the Hebrew verb גלה in 13:22, the forceful undressing and violation of the female figure serves as an image for the exile of the people of Judah (see 13:19: (הַגִּלְתִּי יְהוּדָה כְּלָהּ הַגִּלְתִּי שְׁלֹמִים).

This allegorical dimension is finally consolidated in the extended metaphors in the book of Ezekiel, which present a comprehensive overview of biblical history in the form of female biographies. In both Ezek 16 and 23, the prospering time of nationhood is represented by the lavish provisions of the divine husband, while the wives' shameful behaviour identifies cultic and political transgressions as the reason for the downfall of the two kingdoms. Correspondingly, the deprivation of clothing, and the sexual violation of the wives serve as a metaphor for the turning points in biblical history, 722 and 587 BCE, and the ensuing exile. Clothing, nudity, and shame are powerful tools for the interpretation of biblical history, as they draw on anthropological codes of everyday-life that the biblical reader could relate to and involve metaphors that they could emphasise with. As such, these prophetic texts are drastic witnesses for the significant impact of history on the literary production in the Hebrew Bible, and for how biblical authors transformed both language and cultural pre-conceptions to come to terms with the traumatic events of military destruction and exile.

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